

ECGRA Early Care and Education Educator Retention Award (ERA)
Erie County Investing in Families

FINANCIAL AWARD GUIDELINES
REQUEST and ATTESTATION FORMS
Child Care Centers, Group & Family Child Care Homes

Purpose:

This award is designed to support Early Care and Education (ECE) programs who are serving families in Erie County. Priority for these awards will be targeted to Department of Human Services (DHS) ECE programs serving vulnerable or at-risk populations. If there are available funds, they may be awarded to programs who have Pre-K Counts (PKC), Head Start and Head Start State Supplemental (HS & HSSP), Early Head Start (EHS), and/or Private Academic Pre-School (PDE) certification. Provider must be STAR 2, 3, or 4 at time of application. Pre-K counts is considered STAR 4.

Overview:

The ERA Request Forms (PAGE A & Attachment 1) will collect staff-specific information in order for eligible ECE programs to pay awards to qualified owner/operators and teaching staff.

Important Notes:

All award funds are contingent upon the availability of ECGRA funds.

This application may be denied if it is not complete or the instructions have not been followed.

For any questions regarding the completion and submission of the ERA request, please contact the JAM Team Foundation at info@jamteam.org

General Provider Eligibility:

To be eligible for the ERA, an ECE program must meet the following requirements. Additional requirements are detailed by section.

- 4) The provider must be designated at and meet all Keystone STARS Performance Standards associated with a STAR 2 (or higher) designation.
- 2) The provider must maintain the STAR designation for which the provider received the ERA during the approval and payment phase of the ERA. If a STAR level move-down occurs during this process, the provider is no longer eligible for that award amount. It is expected that the provider is making a commitment to maintain the awarded STAR designation.
 - i) If a provider moves down to a STAR 2 or 3 prior to payment, the provider will be required to submit a new application.
 - ii) If a provider moves down to a STAR 1 prior to payment, the provider will no longer be eligible to receive payment.
- 3) The provider must hold a regular Department of Human Services (DHS) Certificate of Compliance. If a provider has a Provisional Certificate of Compliance, award funds may be available upon return to a full DHS Certificate of Compliance. PKC, HS, HSSP, EHS, or PDE certification may apply and will be awarded based on available funding.
- 4) The provider must have an agreement with Child Care Works (CCW) through the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC). Furthermore, the provider must be willing to enroll a child who qualifies for subsidy, if space is available.
- 5) Providers who owe liens/liabilities to the commonwealth and/or federal government, including tax liabilities, will be suspended from Keystone STARS and will not be able to receive grants and awards until those liens/liabilities are fully satisfied and the program provides the ELRC a clearance certificate

issued by the Department of Revenue. Clearance certificates can be obtained at the provider's local tax office.

Award Timeline:

Due to limited funds, it is recommended providers complete and submit their application by 5:00 p.m. Friday, April 25, 2025. All completed grant documents as listed below should be emailed to: info@jamteam.org

Electronic submission:

- **Page A Request Form** and **Page B Attestation Form** below; and
- **Attachment #1 ERA Excel Budget Workbook** – see Attachment's instructions for details

Guidelines and Compliance for the ERA Award

Non-compliance with any requirement of the Grant Agreement could result in the provider being required to return grant funds to ECGRA.

- All award funds are a one-time payment for those working directly with children and are not to be used to supplement the incomes of teachers.
- Funds attributed to this grant must be expended within six months of the Board approval date as specified in the signed Grant Agreement. Grants not expended must be returned.
- The provider must retain original documentation for all award expenditures for seven years and ensure the documented amounts match total expenditures as reported on the respective Attachment #1 ERA Excel Budget Workbook. Non-compliance will result in grantee being ineligible for future grants.
- **Important: Any unexpended funds must be returned to ECGRA.**

Payroll Tax Assistance

This grant will include the 7.65% employer portion of payroll taxes associated with the payments made to eligible staff included on Attachment #1. This amount will be calculated for you on Attachment 1 and should be included on the Attestation Page. Please ensure all Totals on all documents are the same.

Award Reconciliation/Closure

The completion of the respective attachments will directly tie the request and approval of the award funds to the reconciliation and approval of expended funds.

For grant closing and budget approval/expense reconciliation, the following **must** be completed and submitted to info@jamteam.org no later than November 30, 2025.

Right to Know Law

Federal funding and local share gaming revenue (State funding) is being used as a source for the program funding. As such, Erie County, the U.S. Department of the Treasury, or their authorized representatives shall have right of access to records of the grantee to conduct audits or other investigations. Grantee records including the grant application, may be subject to disclosure under Pennsylvania's Right to Know Law.

Electronic Submission:

- Attachment #1 ERA Excel Budget Workbook with all tabs completed.
(The budget revision tab is to be completed only if budget revision becomes necessary).

Providers **must** keep documentation of ERA pay-outs to staff for their records, for review by the Jam Team Foundation or ECGRA and for state/federal agents who may need to review documents for auditing/monitoring purposes. **All grant related documents must be maintained for 7 years.**

- Allowable documentation: Payroll/employee compensation documents indicate payee, date, amount paid and description of payment and/or is supported by a check or other proof of employee payment.
- Payroll documents should remain onsite and should not be submitted with Attachment #1.

Examples of Unallowable Documentation

The following is a listing of documents that are unallowable as confirmation of a receipt or invoice:

- Copies of general ledger posting records.
- Copies of check registers or listing of checks written by providers.
- Computer accounting record screen-shots or other lists of data indicating payment.
- Documents that do not indicate payee, date, amount paid and description of payment and/or is not supported by a check or other form of payment.
- Documents that appear to have been altered or changed in any way.

Eligible Staff Persons

To be eligible, staff must be listed and verified on the providers staff report in the PD Registry. The following staff positions are eligible for this award:

Position Titles:

- OO = Owner/Operator as Primary Caregiver;
- PSP = Primary Staff Person as the Operator
- D/AD = Director and one Assistant Director
- GS = Group Supervisor
- AGS = Assistant Group Supervisor
- A = Aide

*Please refer to the Career Pathway on the PA Key website for clarifications.

- **Administrative, custodial, transportation, food service staff, and volunteers are not eligible for the ERA unless they have a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) and work at least 15 hours per week directly with children. If this is the case, they should be classified as an Aide or AGS.**

ECE Educator Retention Award (ERA) Award Amounts

Educator Retention Award (ERA): Staff awards are tiered to the program’s STAR level, hours worked and Career Pathway Level. Hours are calculated on the average number of hours the staff person worked for the past 12 months. Please refer to the table below.

Pro-rated ERA Table

STAR Level Attained	# Hours Worked Per Week	Director/AD Owner/Operator Level B or above	All Qualified Staff (Career Pathway Levels)*		
			Level C or above	Level B or B+	Level A or A+
STAR 2	15 – 20	\$ 2,750	\$ 1,750	\$ 1,000	\$ 500
	21 - 40	\$ 4,500	\$ 3,500	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,000
STAR 3	15 – 20	\$ 3,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,500	\$ 750
	21 - 40	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 1,500
STAR 4	15 – 20	\$ 3,500	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,000
	21 - 40	\$ 6,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 2,000

The intent of the ERA is to assist providers in establishing a stable workforce as they work toward higher levels of quality by reducing turnover and improving the education of teaching staff. To be eligible, a provider must meet site-specific requirements as well as staff-specific requirements.

ECE Provider Eligibility Requirements

The **provider** must meet the following site-specific requirements:

- Be able to provide the following upon request:
 - Copies of employee salary scale, bonus policy and personnel handbook
 - Proof of payment of payroll taxes
 - Verification of staff eligibility through Career Pathway Placement in the PD Registry.
- ERA funds must be processed through payroll and are subject to applicable taxes (processing through IRS 1099 is prohibited). Adhere to IRS guidelines for employers and be responsible for any employer’s portion of taxes as awards are distributed.
 - If a legal entity is a limited liability corporation (LLC) and must file a Schedule K-1, they must also submit a 1040 Form to document that the appropriate taxes are being paid.
 - For a group provider that files taxes with a Schedule C, they must also submit a 1040 Form to document that the appropriate taxes are being paid.
 - To prevent financial penalties to the provider from the US Department of Labor, providers are required to use all salary given to a staff person including ERA funds to calculate hourly rate of pay for over-time.

* Please refer to the Career Pathway on the PA Key website for clarifications regarding degree types, related degrees, credit hours, etc.

ECE Educator Eligibility Requirements

- **Staff** must be employed at the same legal entity for at least 12 consecutive months prior to the date of ERA request.
- Teaching staff awards may be used only for staff who work directly with children during operating hours (at least 15 hours) a week.
- Award amounts are based on the number of hours worked. Staff members working less than 15 hours per week are not eligible for awards. This may be an average of 15 hours over a 12 month period.

Academic Eligibility Requirements

Please refer to the Career Pathway on the PA Key website for clarifications regarding degree types, related degrees, credit hours, etc.

- Owner/Operator Awards
 - At least a Level B on the Career Pathway
 - Can receive the director ERA at Career Pathway A+ with an approved educational plan to achieve Career Pathway Level B
- Teaching Staff Awards
 - At least a Level A on the Career Pathway
- Teaching staff who are below Level A are not eligible.
- Administrative, custodial, transportation, food service staff, and volunteers are **not** eligible for the ERA.

Reporting Requirements

A closeout report will be required at the completion of the program. Details will be furnished at a grantee award meeting.

ECGRA must submit quarterly reports to Erie County. Grantees will need to furnish the following information:

1. Number of households served
2. Number of children served
3. Race, ethnicity, gender, and income level of families supported.

Educator Retention Award (ERA) Request Form

To be completed by provider and submitted to info@jamteam.org

Name of Provider _____

Address of Provider _____ STAR Level _____

Phone Number _____ MPI# on Certificate of Compliance _____

Number of children being served at time of application: _____

Instructions:

- On this worksheet, document all information for each staff person who is eligible. **Do not leave any columns blank.**
- Please refer to the eligibility requirements on pages 1-4 **if you have any questions.**
- Reference Educator Retention Award Table on page 3** to determine the amount entered in the "Award Amount Requested" column for each staff member
- Please make sure the PA Key website at www.pakeys.org is updated with the correct Career Pathway information for each staff member.**
- Indicate if the staff works with school-age children and how many hours per week.
- Indicate if the staff member works in a classroom funded through Head Start, Pre-K Counts, or Early Intervention.
- List the care level of the classroom the staff member spends 50% or more of their time during the day.
 - Only those staff members who are eligible: Administrative, custodial, transportation, food service staff, and volunteers are **not** eligible for the ERA.
- Make copies of this form for additional staff.

Employee Name (first and last name)	Position Title [†]	Date of Hire	Care Level of Classroom (INF, YOT, OLT, PRE, YSA, OSA or MXD) [‡]	Earnings (Child Care Annual Salary & Bonuses)	# Hours Worked Per Week	Career Pathway Level	Current Level of Education & Major Attained (as it appears on diploma) [§]	Does this staff work with school- aged children? Yes/No and, if yes, list number of hours per week	Does this staff work in a classroom that receives funding through Head Start, Pre-K Counts or Early Intervention? (please specify)	Award Amount Requested
<i>Example: Jane Doe</i>	OO	3/2/2000	MXD	\$25,000	40	CLC	BA in Human Development	No	No	\$6,000
										\$
										\$
										\$
										\$
										\$
										\$
										\$

[†] Position Titles: OO = Owner/Operator as Primary Caregiver; PSP = Primary Staff Person as the Operator

[‡] Position Titles: D = Director; GS = Group Supervisor; AGS = Assistant Group Supervisor; A = Aide; PSP = Primary Staff Person as the Operator

[§] If staff does not provide teaching time in classroom, fill in "No."

[§]Please refer to the Career Pathway on the PA Key website for clarifications.

Name of Provider _____ MPI# _____ STAR Level _____

**ECE Educator Retention Award (ERA)
ATTESTATION Form**

To be signed by Legally Authorized representative and submitted to info@jamteam.org

Instructions: In the table below, please list the total amount requested for the ECE Educator Retention Awards, Payroll Tax Assistance from Attachment #1 and the Grand Total.

At Closure/Reconciliation: If a budget revision is required, email info@jamteam.org to discuss options.

TOTAL ECE Educator RETENTION AWARD REQUESTED	\$
Payroll Tax Assistance (multiply total by .0765 or 7.65%)	
Grant Total	

Instructions: Please complete this page and email with all copies of Page A and Attachment #1. Please make sure the Grant Total on this page matches the Total Amount Requested on Attachment #1. To be eligible to receive the ERA, make sure the individual who signs this request has legal authority to represent the provider.

Attestation:

By signing this document, the grantee certifies that the provider is in compliance with all ERA grant requirements. The grantee also certifies that, as of the date of this grant request, this legal entity/program has no liens/liabilities or other commonwealth or federal obligations. The grantee certifies that, as of the date of this grant request, this program location has a full DHS Certificate of Compliance.

Signature Section:

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Signature of the Individual Who is Legally Authorized to Represent the Provider	Date
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Print Name	
<hr/>	
Legal Entity Address & Phone Number	
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Title	
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